

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S PREMIER CHESS MAGAZINE

RANK & FILE



1000GM PRODUCES A GM

VIKTOR MATVIISHEN'S FINAL NORM

SO-CAL REPS IMPRESS
NATIONAL INVITATIONALS

IM-ELECT GAZARIAN WINS
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST OPEN

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!
THE 2022 BOARD ELECTION

OVER THE BOARD

Cover Courtesy of Randy Hough

*SCCF's Board Leads
the Way for Chess in
Southern California*

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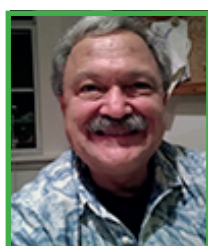
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EDITOR'S CORNER

I recently played the US Open which was my first tournament in over a year. I finished with a mediocre score of 5/9 in a field of mostly lower rated players. But, I did run into one of my old students, Gabriel Eidelman, from back when I revamped and ran the STAR Education chess program. I built their after school program program from 5 schools to 30 and from 0 tournaments to monthly events. My approach was to make every students feel welcome no matter what their skill level. Plus, I would buy large trophies and prizes that would inspire the really competitive students! That is exactly what Gabe told me I had done after he won his final game against GM Rosentalis and tied for 3rd in the US Open (look for the article in next issue). What he did is no less than incredible. If you look at the ratings of every player finishing in the top ten, they are all over 2500+. What an amazing feeling to know that I was able to inspire this type of skill and passion. That is why I am incredibly pleased with the progress of our 501(c)(3) Chess Prodigies. I mentioned

it in my last Editor's Corner but if you have not visited the webstie chessprodgies.com you absolutely must. The Dean of Scholastic Chess, Dewain Barber, has instilled in us the mission of building an all volunteer organization solely dedicated to providing college scholarship and funding for the scholastic national invitational. Please see pg 5 for a full list of their accomplishments! And, with that I'll leave you with an incredible move that I had no chance of finding in a bullet game.



**Black to Move
Answer on Pg 5**



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST OPEN

By Chuck Ensey



Normally this event has a game on Friday night, two on Saturday and two on Sunday, but because the 4th of July fell on a Monday this year, we were able to expand into three full days with 8 games total - 3 on Saturday, 3 on Sunday and 2 on Monday. Faster time controls early on (G/60 with 10 second delay for day 1 and then G/90, d10 for day 2) allowed us to try this expanded schedule. The last day, with the most important games, was played at a slower pace of G/120, d10. The turnout was quite good with 166 players in four sections, so I think people liked this format. The ballroom is perfect for this event and we really love everything about this centrally located venue, the Irvine Orange County Hilton, near John Wayne airport.

Two GMs from Hungary tried their luck at this event but a local hero ended up winning 1st Place by drawing both GMs and winning all his other games. That would be IM-elect Kirk Ghazarian, who won \$1,600 for a 7-point score. GM Gabor Nagy placed 2nd with 6 ½ for the \$1,000 prize; he also drew with GM David Berczes in round 4 and with Alex Wang in the last round. Third Place was won by GM Berczes (5 ½ points for a \$600 prize). FM Kretchetov, Alex Wang and Rohan Rajaram tied for a pooled prize of 4th/ 5th Place/BU2300 for \$300 each with a 5-point score. Due to the good attendance the prize fund was actually increased by \$1,000 to \$11,000 from the advertised and guaranteed prize of \$10,000. The 6th Place prize of \$100 was one of those added prizes, along with some added and boosted prizes in the lower sections, plus we added 4 Best Game prizes. The 4 sections were evenly spread out with 35 players in the Open, 43 in the U2200, 39 in the U1800 and 49 in the U1400, not including several house players that were used due an odd number in each section.

4 players tied 1st Place with 6 points in the U2200 section: Gordon Xu, Yugi Wang, Leo Wang and Esther Jou for \$500 each (they won BU2200, BU2000, 2nd U2200 and 2nd U2000 to be more precise). Note that actually they were all U2000, only 2 players were rated 2000 or over: Randy Hough (2000) and Leo Creger (2192), many Experts tried their luck in the Open section. Ashwin Damaraju (1902) won clear 3rd U2200 with 5 ½ points for \$200, while 7 players tied with 5 points for the remaining pooled prizes (4th U2200, 3rd & 4th U2000): Leo Creger, Yanfeng Guo, Alan Peng, Jacob Lee, Miles Zhao, Alejandrino Baluran and Oliver Boydell of NY.

Benjamin Chow won BU1800 with 6 ½ points for \$700 and Tyson Le also won \$700 for BU1600 in this third section. Sarthak Gattani won a reduced prize of \$250 due to his provisional rating of only 17 games, based on the July supplement, which was used for pairing and prize purposes. Lorenzo Antonio won \$300 for 2nd U1600 with 5 ½ points and Joseph McEntee won \$200 for 3rd U1600. Pejman Sagart, Chuck Ensey and Kevin Mayberry won \$50 each for 4th U1800 with 5 points. 5 other players also scored 5, but won 3rd/4th U1600 for \$60 each: Brian Lantz, Ryan Sweezey, Frank Tang, Bruce Young and Rohan Daftuar.

In the U1400 Section Brandon You won BU1400 with an impressive 7 points for \$300. Giancarlo Paniagua won BU1200 with 6 ½ points, again for \$300. Matthew Talukdar scored 6 for 2nd U1400 while new player Phillip Warther also scored 6, but being unrated, won only a book prize. Ziwei Xiao and Christopher Manlove split 2nd/3rd U1400 with 5 ½ for \$50 each while Victor Yi also scored 5 ½, but won \$200 for 2nd U1200. 4 players split the last prize of 3rd U1200 for \$25 each: Vian Parikh, Steven He, Ryan Kong and Ram Stewart, all with 5 points.

An 8-round rated Blitz event was also held on Saturday night and drew nice crowd of 30 players, all in one section at G/5 with 4 second delay. The 2 GMs scored 7 ½ (Nagy) and 7 (Berczes), but all but 5 of the players also won nice prizes, as we almost doubled the prize fund from \$600 to \$1,100 because we were so happy with the turnout and the great spirit of the players. Wallcharts of this and the main event can be found the USCF website.

SO CAL PRODUCES A GM 1000GM TOURNAMENT



*By IM Robert
Shlyakhtenko*

*Robert thinking circa
2019 courtesy of
Sean Manross*

For nearly a decade, high-level invitational events have been few and far between in Southern California. That may be changing thanks to the combined efforts of Srikanth Bangalore, Rushaan Mahajan, and Josiah Stearman, who initiated a series of round-robin title norm events in Los Angeles under the joint organization of the 501(c)(3), 1000GM and Learn2Chess. These 9 round tournaments offer up-and-coming players a chance to compete for IM/GM norms and titles. The most incredible part is the free entry thanks to Srikanth's generous sponsorship. Norm events typically cost \$800.

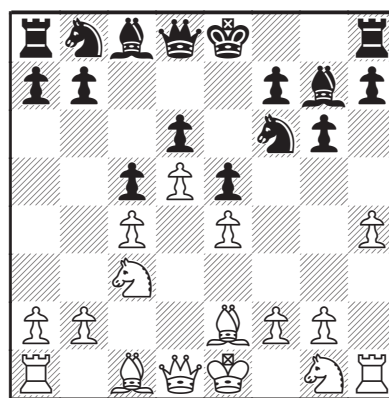
I had the opportunity to participate in the second of these events, held from July 25-29 and directed by arbiter Randy Hough. Players were divided into two sections: a GM group and an IM group. The GM tournament produced not only a norm, but a Grandmaster title. Viktor Matviishen, a student at Texas Tech University, raced through the competition and finished undefeated with 6.5/9. Having now completed his final norm and already meeting the 2500 rating requirement, Matviishen just needs to await confirmation of his title at the next FIDE Congress. He was outscored only by GM Arman Mikaelyan who won five games and drew four to finish with 7/9.

The top norm seeker in this section was IM Josiah Stearman, who started with three losses but proceeded to spectacularly win six games in a row to clinch clear 3rd. In the IM group, notable norm seeker results were achieved by FM Max Gedajlovic and CM Rushaan

Mahajan (both scoring 5/9), as the IMs held their own to finish on top. IM Alex Ostrovskiy deservedly won the tournament with a 7.5/9 score, 1.5 points ahead of IM Aaron Grabinsky (6/9). As for my own performance, I completed the tournament with only an even score in the GM section, but was able to play a few interesting games. I will share one of them below:

**Woodward, Andy (2486) -
Shlyakhtenko, Robert (2422)
Hollywood Chess Norm Classic July 2022**

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.h4!



A strong prophylactic plan. In the Czech Benoni, black generally plays for two pawn breaks: f7–f5 and b7–b5. With this move, White invites h7–h5, which makes a later f7–f5 much less desirable for black owing to the resulting weaknesses on the g5– and h5–squares.

7...h5 7...h6 8.h5 g5 9.g4 is worse. **8.Bg5 a6 9.Qd2** I was aware of the classic game Vladimirov - Stein, 1957, which continued with the more consistent 9.a4! Nbd7 10.Qd2 Qa5 11.Ra3 Rb8 12.Nh3 Qb4 13.Qc2 Qa5 14.f3 Nh7 15.Be3 Qd8 16.Nf2, and Black's lengthy maneuvers had accomplished nothing.

9...Nbd7 vent this move. Further maneuvering would compromise the flexibility of Black's position.

11.cxb5 axb5 12.Bxb5 Ba6 Black is aiming for compensation in the style of the Benko gambit, but objectively his position is worse. **13.Bc6** The most

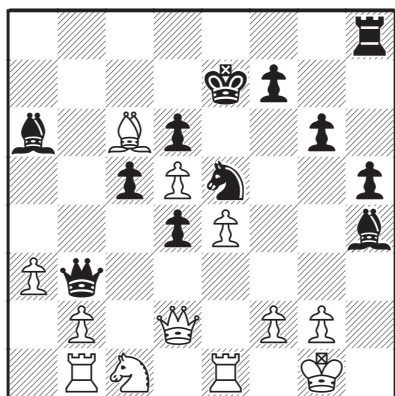


ambitious move, but not the only good one. The most natural approach was 13.Bxa6 Rxa6 14.0-0 **13...Rb8 14.Ng1?!** A slow regrouping, which gives Black time to organize counterplay. 14.f3 was better, with a subsequent Ke1-f2. **14...Rb4 15.Nge2 Qb8 16.Bxf6** in order to preserve his extra pawn, White must part with the bishop pair. **16...Bxf6 17.Rb1 Ke7** Preparing to activate the knight with c4 and Nc5.

18.a3 Now comes the first critical moment of the game. It is of utmost importance that Black creates some disharmony in White's camp; otherwise, the first player will consolidate his material advantage with no trouble at all..

18...Rd4! The only sensible move. **19.Nxd4** 19.Qe3 was safer, but understandably White did not want to allow Black's rook to remain entrenched on d4. **19...exd4 20.Ne2 Ne5** Black's minor pieces come to life, whereas White's rooks have little scope. This, coupled with the long-term prospects offered by Black's passed d-pawn, give Black more than sufficient compensation for the exchange.

21.0-0 In view of the above note, it was worth considering 21.b4!? to generate some counterplay. Now Black should play 21...Bxe2! (21...Nd3+? 22.Kf1 leaves Black unable to deal with b4-b5.; 21...Bd3 22.Rc1 is also less convincing.) 22.Qxe2 c4 23.f4 d3 24.Qa2 Nxc6 25.Qxc4! (25.dxc6 Qa7 26.Qf2 Bd4 wins.) 25...Nd4 26.Qxd3 Rc8 27.0-0 Rc3! 28.Qa6! with mutual chances. **21...Qb3!** Both an attacking and prophylactic move. **22.Rfe1** 22.a4!? , intending to exchange Black's a6-bishop with Bc6-b5, would have eased White's defense. **22...Bxh4 23.Nc1** This was White's idea. If the queen retreats, then White has time for b2-b4. So Black must continue energetically:



23...Qf3! 23...Nf3+? leads only to a draw after 24.gxf3 Qxf3 25.e5! Qg4+ 26.Kh1 Bg5 27.Qa5 Bf4 28.Qc7+ Kf8 29.Qd8+ Kg7 30.Qf6+ Kg8 31.Bd7! and White is in time to create threats of his own. **24.gxf3** The queen was too dangerous an attacking piece to be left alive. For example, after 24.Ba4!? (intending Bd1) 24...Qf6 25.Bd1 Nc4 26.Qc2 the calm 26...Kf8! leaves White defenseless against Black's buildup.

24...Nxf3+ 25.Kg2 Nxd2 26.Ra1 The endgame is technically winning for Black. White's disorganized pieces cannot effectively fight against the c- and d- pawns. **26...Rb8** 26...c4 was more accurate. **27.Ra2** White should have used the opportunity to play 27.b4 c4 , where it's possible that the a- and b- pawns will have their own say. **27...c4 28.a4** [28.b4 cxb3 29.Rxd2 b2 30.Nb3 Rxb3 31.Rb1 Bd3 32.Rxb2 Bxe4+ 33.Kh2 Bg5 34.Rxb3 Bxd2 is winning for Black. **28...d3 29.e5!** A clever try; On the immediate 29.b4 cxb3 30.Rxd2 , Black would play 30...Bg5! (But not 30...b2? 31.Nxd3 b1Q 32.Rxb1 Rxb1 and White can still play on.) 31.Rxd3 b2 and wins. **29...dxe5** 29...Rb4 was perhaps simplest. **30.b4** This was White's idea. If Black continues the same way as in the above note, then White is saved by Rxe5+! at the right moment. Now Black has only one way to win. **30...Rxb4!!** [After this move Black will be down a rook for three pawns. Yet White cannot stop the advancing mass of connected passers. 30...cxb3 31.Rxd2 Bg5 32.Nxb3 Rxb3 33.Rxe5+ Kf6 34.Rxg5 Kxg5 35.d6 Kf6 36.d7 Ke7 37.Rd1! Bc4 38.Re1+ Be6 39.Re4! gives white enough counterplay to hold.

31.Rxd2 Kd6 32.Rdd1 32.Na2 was more resilient.

32...Rb2! Paralyzing White's pieces. The rest is a matter of technique -- Black simply needs to push the pawns, albeit very carefully. **33.Rf1 e4 34.Kg1 Bg5 35.Be8 c3 36.f4 Bd8 37.Bxf7 d2 38.Bxg6 Bb6+ 39.Kh1 Bxf1 40.Bxe4 Be3! 41.Nd3 Bxd3 42.Bxd3 c2 43.Bxc2 Rxc2 44.Rxd2 Bxd2 0-1**

Elite events tend to have a trickle-down effect on the rest of the chess community, as titled players remain in the area to participate in other local tournaments. For example, several of the GMs in this tournament played in the Pacific Coast Open just a week earlier. Currently, 1000GM is planning another norm event in September, with more on the way. Hopefully, these tournaments will help spark a resurgence in Southern California Chess.



EARNING THE FINAL NORM

By IM-Elect Kirk Ghazarian

Going into this game I was aware of how dangerous my opponent was, especially with white, as he won all of his white games in this tournament. My plan was to create a complex fight early on because I wanted a memorable game after I secured the IM title.

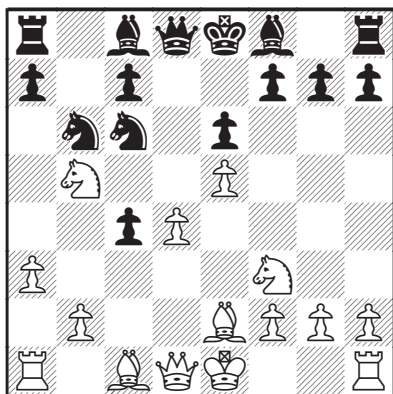
Konstantin, Kavutskiy (2395) - Ghazarian, Kirk (2381)
Bay Area Chess GM Norm April 2022

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 [My opponent plays many lines as white so I only briefly prepared this before the game. I considered going for my pet line the Cambridge Springs defense, but at the last moment I decided to play something sharper.]

4...dxc4 The Vienna. I decided to try a rather topical line.
5.e4 This is certainly the most critical try for an advantage for white.

5...b5!? **6.e5** **6.Nxb5** Despite Carlsen playing this, I don't think black has problems equalizing here. See Carlsen, M (2847) - Nepomniachtchi, I (2789) chess24.com INT 2021

6...Nd5 7.Nxb5 Nb6 8.Be2 Nc6 9.a3!?



My opponent played this new move with many recent grandmaster games and I was already on my own. I don't understand why this move is good logically, but I know these positions from the 5...b5 Vienna are highly concrete and if the computer likes it then it must be good. I think the idea is to play Qc2 and complete development without castling short, and then throwing the h-pawn up the board. 9.0-0 is the main move, where both sides need to be very well prepared.

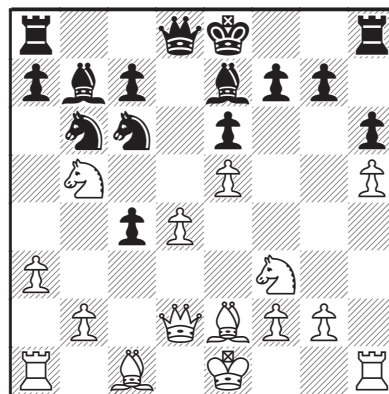
9...Be7 This is not the only move, but I played it because I wanted to keep my options open. I'm not sure if I want

to play Ba6 or Bb7, and both are typical moves. Most grandmasters played this.

10.h4N Although this is a novelty, h4 is a typical idea in these positions with the intention of playing h5 and then lifting the rook to g3 via h3. This aggressive plan is one of the most challenging ways white can play against the 5...b5 Vienna.

10.Be3 Is the main move. **10...Bb7 11.Qc2 Qd7 12.Nc3 Na5 13.Rd1 f5 14.exf6 gxf6 15.0-0 0-0-0** This double egged position with opposite side castling is risky for both sides.

10...Bb7 11.h5 h6 12.Qd2?!



This move is typical in the mainline where white doesn't go for this early h4-h5 pawn advance. White has combined Qd2 with the moves a3 and h4-h5, which simply loses too much time in this position.

12...Qd7 The strongest move, but also the most natural one **13.Qf4 0-0-0?** Another typical move, but I miss out on a nice combination exploiting white's poor coordination. **13...Na5! 14.Nc3 Nb3 15.Rb1 Bxf3 16.Bxf3 Bg5! 17.Qg3 Bxc1-+**

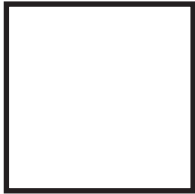
14.Be3 of course not **14.Qxf7?? Bb4+ 15.axb4 Qxf7-+**

14...f5 15.Nc3 Na5 16.0-0?! It's too late to castle now. Black will attack on the kingside with Rg8 and g5 meanwhile all of white's counterplay on the queenside is stifled. **16.Rd1 Kb8 17.Qg3 Rhg8** This position is very tense, I think black has an easier position to play because he's the one playing for a pawn break (Qe8 then g6) but white is equal here.

16...Qe8?! **16...g6!** this immediately was even stronger **17.hxg6 Rdg8-+**

17.Nd2 Rg8 18.Bf3 g5 19.hxg6 Bg5 20.Bxb7+ Nxb7

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2022 SCCF BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

This year SCCF members will elect six of the twelve Board members to terms ending following the 2023 board election. Vote for up to six. Mail ballots to SCCF Elections, C/O Chuck Ensey, SDCC, PO Box 120162, San Diego CA 92112. Those voting by mail must include their name on the outside of the envelope. Mail in ballots must be received by Thursday, September 1. In-person voting will also be available at the Southern Cal Open until Monday, September 5, at 10 AM. Candidate statements and the ballot are below.

Brian Glover

As a life member of the USCF, active tournament player, chess teacher and current member of the SCCF Board I will be happy to continue to serve if reelected.

Frank Lee

Please allow me to promote chess in Southern California to expand the number of players & tournament play for the next generation. As a professional digital marketer managing successful popular web and social properties, I can help with the modern challenges and opportunities to better serve our events & communications.

Steve Morford

My board involvement allows me to give back to a life-long hobby. I stepped back in as board president this past year. Our focus has been to rebuild the schedule of tournaments and provide members with a quality publication. I welcome support promoting chess for all ages and proficiencies.

Jim Harrell

I enjoy being part of the SCCF board and promoting chess. I have directed many tournaments and think holding lots of tournaments is the best way to boost our membership. SCCF is rebounding and we need to keep the current chess boom going. Thanks for your support!

Jim Mennella

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Chess Players of Southern California as a member of SCCF's board for the past 6 years. I hope you will continue to allow me to use my 40+ years of experience as a US Chess delegate to represent you.

Dylan Quercia

I am a chess educator and journalist working to improve all areas of chess. I have been teaching chess for 15 years and started the 501(c)(3), Chess Prodigies, last year to provide college scholarships to well deserved youth. Thank you for your consideration.

-----DETACH HERE-----

Vote for no more than six.

- _____ Brian Glover
- _____ Jim Harrell
- _____ Frank Lee
- _____ Jim Mennella
- _____ Steve Morford
- _____ Dylan Quercia

BALLOT

Write-ins

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